Portrayal of Gender Stereotype in Bollywood Cinema: An Analytical Study

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INTRODUCTION:-

Cinema is the most widespread forms of mass communication playing a key role in shaping opinions, building images and reinforcing dominant cultural values. Cinema is believed to be able to entertain audiences from all over the world and create another world that is different from the real world, a world that offers an escape from everyday life. Cinema changes peoples thinking and forms new cultural, social and political values. Cinema has always been popular. In India movies influence society in many ways and influence peoples personal lives be it the clothes they wear the way they talk their social behaviour all of that is directly or indirectly influenced by the film Indian cinema has gone from classic mythological blockbusters to bollywoodized remakes of hit Hollywood movies in the 1970s Indian cinema developed a more socially conscious and politically oriented form of cinema.

HISTORY OF CINEMA

The history of Indian cinema begins in the 19th century. In 1896, the first film made by the Lumiere brothers was shown in Mumbai (formerly Bombay). But real history was made when Harishchandra Sakharam Bhatavdekar, known as 'Save Dada' the photographer, was so impressed with the Lumière brothers' production that he ordered a camera from England. His first film was filmed in Hanging Gardens in Mumbai known as The Wrestlers. It was a simple shoot of a wrestling match, shown in 1899 and considered the first film of the Indian film industry.

The beginning of Bollywood:-

The father of Indian cinema, Dadasaheb Phalke, released his first feature film, Raja Harishchandra, in 1913. The silent film was a commercial success. Dadasaheb is not only a producer, but also a director, screenwriter, cinematographer, editor, makeup artist and art director. Raja Harischandra was the first Indian film of its kind to be shown in London in 1914. Although India's first film maestro, Dadasaheb Phalke, supervised and directed the production of 23 films from 1913 to 1918, the early growth of the Indian film industry was not as fast as that of Hollywood.

Many new manufacturing companies emerged in the early 1920s. Films based on mythological and historical facts and episodes from the Mahabharata and Ramayana dominated the 1920s, but Indian audiences also welcomed Hollywood films, especially action films.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN BOLLYWOOD CINEMA

The image, position and role of women in society is reflected in cinema and has even been present in popular Indian cinema almost since its inception. Films are heavily inspired by religion and mythology, where female characters are seen as symbols of virtue and values, those who can do no wrong, the idea of loyalty and submission to one's husband, Hindi cinema succeeds in institutionalizing patriarchal values. Films like Dahej (1950), Devi (1970), Pati Parmeshwar (1988), Gauri (1968) portrayed women as passive and submissive wives and martyrs for their families. The study pointed out that the representation of women in films was a major concern in the 1960s and 1970s and criticized the representation of women in films and their role in the film industry.

In the films, they are so protected that the female victim refuses to leave her husband's house, despite severe physical and mental abuse, and only justifies leaving the marriage home at the time of his death. But over time, her role changed, from being dependent on her husband to being very independent in driving the storyline.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:-

As of my last update in September 2021, bollywood cinema like any other film industry has portrayed women in various ways, reflecting the broader societal attitudes, cultural norms, trends prevalent in India. The portrayal of women in bollywood has evolved over years, but there have been both positive and negative aspects to this representation.

This study looks at how women are stereotypically portrayed in bollywood cinema and what is the impact of the stereotypical portrayal of women in the society.

Therefore the statement of the problem is: “Portrayal of gender stereotype in bollywood cinema: An analytical study’’

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1) To study how women were portrayed in bollywood movies till the 60s.
2) To examine whether there has been a change in bollywood cinema after globalization.
3) To understand whether there has been increase in the portrayal of women in bollywood cinema after the 90's.
4) To scrutinize changes that have taken place in the stereotypic portrayal of women in bollywood cinema in the first two decades of the 21st centry
5) To investigate the effect it has caused on the viewers due to the portrayal of stereotypical images in bollywood movies

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:-

Indian society is highly influence by the Bollywood cinema. The cultural significance of Bollywood is immense. This isn't just a film industry, it's a cultural phenomenon. Bollywood reflects India's dynamic and unique culture and is heavily influenced by Indian society.

Throughout its history Bollywood films have reflected the ever-changing values and morals of Indian culture.

Bollywood films incorporate Indian culture in almost every aspect. Though Indian society has been modernized yet the presentation of women falls within the patriarchal system whether it is Bollywood Cinema or Indian society.

The significance of the study is to understand why the portrayal of stereotypic women in Bollywood cinema is within the traditional framework of the Indian society.

HYPOTHESIS:-

A hypothesis is a tentative statement with reference to the association among the two or more variables in specific it is said as, “testable prediction regarding what is expected to happen in a research study”.

The hypothesis is what the examiners expect the connections linking two or more variables that involves more than a presumption.

Although a research can be conducted without forming a single hypothesis, but as described by Kumar Ranjit(2005) hypothesis bring clarity and focus to the research problem. A hypothesis is nothing but a statement based on assumption and its needs to be tested during research using different methodologies.

For the present research I have formulated following hypothesis

1) Early 60’s the portrayal of women in bollywood cinema has been within the framework of tradition.
2) After Globalization the portrayal of women stereotype has been slightly changed in Bollywood cinema .
3) After 90’s there has been rise in the number of women centric films
4) In the recent years Bollywood has seen an increase in strong and independent female characters who challenge gender stereotypes and actively participate in shaping their own destinies
5) Despite the positive change, Bollywood still tends to resort to stereotypical roles.
6) Impact of stereotypical portrayal of women on the viewers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:-

The methodology adopted in the study will be constructed on descriptive cross-sectional design.

The study aims to analyze how the women are stereotypically portrayed in Bollywood cinema.

It will be descriptive because it would seek to analyze responders from various demographic profiles. The information will be gathered and analyzed by using relevant statistical tools.

Therefore the studies research design will be quantitative, descriptive, cross sectional to address all the investigation areas.

DESIGNING OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE:-

A completely structured self-administered data collecting instrument a total of thirty research question will be constructed based on the studies' objectives which largely featured close ended questions, to get primary information from the sample of respondents.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:-

Datta S. Globalization and Representations of Women in Indian Cinema. Soc Sci. 28 (2000): 71-82.

In his research, he refers to the concept of cultural identity and national personality which is reflected in gender through the media and films. In the study, he mentions that world views changed in the 1980s with the advent of satellite television. Flooded with dominant images of women, dominated by masculine ideals of achievement such as physical muscularity and physical aggression, narrative cinema also presents a conservative ideology in glorifying the masculine and objectifying the feminine. At the end of the 20th century, globalization represented the interests of free markets for everyone. This transition and the use of the nation as a family paradigm places women in a subordinate position, limited to domestic and maternal roles. But she believed that the women's movement and the struggle for an egalitarian society pushed women from the margins to the center of their lyrics and made women's subjectivity central. In her research, she presents filmmakers such as AparnaSen, Vijaya Mehta, and ArunaRaje who present portraits of female protagonists that accentuate their social and sexual identities.

Sometimes movies are made for entertainment, but this often harms women's intelligence and self-esteem. Interest in films by feminists has increased due to the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women in cinema.

The role of women in modern India has undergone a fundamental shift, with gradual shifts in the perception of women in society and major advances towards equality in film roles over the last few decades. The way women are portrayed in cinema is a subject of great debate in India. The complex and

interesting relationship between women and cinema has a lot of literature depicting various aspects of women in Indian films.

Now contemporary India raises various questions about how women are portrayed on screen, how women's issues are treated in cinema, what is the meaning of feminism for filmmakers, what is the role of women directors and writers in cinema's representation of women's issues. The depiction of women and feminist film criticism also provide a different view of the reality depicted in cinema, thereby making a significant contribution to the situation of women.

Butalia U. Women in Indian Cinema. Feminist Rev 17 (1984):108-110.

States in her research that the strongest communication medium is Indian commercial cinema. Many filmmakers in India have produced films on women's social issues to address women's issues such as marriage, widowhood, dowry and rape. These movements allowed women to be more visible on screen, and films dealing with women's issues were produced. Previously, we saw only one in 100 films that presented women as human beings in their own right and continued to depict women as sex objects and unequal partners. He suggested that Indian cinema should focus more on a balanced portrayal of women and avoid stereotypes.

Anucelly– cited in Jain and Rai, 2002 [3] analyzed the aspects of women's representation in "popular Indian cinema" in her research. By using semiotic and psychoanalytic approaches, she shows that the image of women shown in the cinema is not in accordance with the reality of her life. Instead, the function of women is a factor of myths, customs and rituals. He also explained that the victimization syndrome is an integral part of the depiction of women and life stories in ancient Indian cinema. Indian cinema usually looks at a male protagonist who controls and limits female subjectivity and sexuality in an object. He gave the example of films such as Satyajit Ray's Devi, which was seen as a revolutionary and seminal attempt to present the image of women as protagonists, using myths as a normative paradigm for the construction of ideal femininity.

SupriyaAgarwal – quoted in Jain and Rai, 2002 [3] analyzed the identity of Muslim women in films in her research. He mentioned that in Bollywood Hindi cinema between the 1970s and 1990s, the portrayal of women was projected through stereotypes and the perspective of women was never included

in the roles. In her research, she analyzed four films dedicated to Muslim women - Pakeezah (1971), Nikaah (1982), Bazaar (1982) and UmraoJaan (1982). In these films we can see that women are placed in a subordinate position by strong societal forces and are oppressed by various societal pressures. In fact, she describes women from a male perspective, because women cannot have respectable or independent identities without being under the protection and control of men. Men are depicted as strong, powerful, and empowered. Conversely, women are portrayed as weak and helpless and must submit to male authority. He suggests questioning and discussing these questions.

Uberoi P. Feminine Identity and National Ethos in Indian Calendar Art. Economic Political Weekly 25 (1990): WS41-WS48.

Analyzes the representation of women in Indian popular art and in his study he states that women's representation has two processes.

The first is the commercialization of women and the second is the tropicalization of femininity in the overall cultural context which is homogenizing and hegemonic. He found that women are the prominent objects of male desire and potential obsession in many modes of representation in social and cultural activities. He analyzes the two main reasons for their invisibility both in society and in the media. On the one hand, women have never been allowed to make a full and proper contribution to society because they have been marginalized in patriarchal discourse, on the other hand, the legitimacy of myths and the authority of society is controlled by men, while women are owned and exchanged in social relations between humans.

She shows various aspects of modification/objectification of women and women's bodies in related media such as advertisements, films etc. She believes that Indian culture and stereotypes have influenced the role of women in society. National culture and modernity have seen "femininity" experience a process of hegemony and homogenization of its identity

SCOPE OF STUDY:-

For the purpose of the study Bollywood films since 1960s will be reviewed. After 1990, the entire society has changed due to globalization.

Globalization has affected the contents of the film as well.

Therefore, the films depicting the portrayal of women stereotype in Bollywood cinema since globalization till 2023 will be taken into consideration for the purpose of the research study

LIMITATIONS:-

For the presented research the films depicting stereotypic women since 1960s to 2023 will be taken in consideration.

This duration is vast for the purpose of the study and the number of films released during this duration is also immense.

Therefore considering the time constraint,

The films that have influenced the society, films which have been successful at the box office during the period 1960's- 2023 and the films that have been discussed more by the film critics, Fifteen such most popular and significant films are going to be analyzed in detail for the purpose of the research and the rest films during the 1960's to 2023 which be studied on macro level.

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